



Cal/EPA

California  
Environmental  
Protection  
Agency



Department of  
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Regulation

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July 22, 1997

PRB 97-51



Pete Wilson  
Governor

Secretary for  
Environmental  
Protection

James W. Wells  
Director

TO: County Agricultural Commissioners

SUBJECT: NITRATE COMPOUNDS FOR BUD BREAK

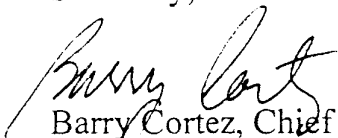
We have received a number of inquiries concerning the use of various nitrate compounds for the induction of bud break in dormant crops. The nitrate products mentioned include calcium ammonium nitrate (CAN 17) and potassium nitrate (UAN) for use on a wide variety of tree crops including cherries.

We believe that these compounds, when used to induce breaking of dormancy, are pesticides under the current California law. Our staff has continued to review available research on these compounds and considers their action to be analogous to the use of hydrogen cyanamide, both in intent and mode of action. Although there have been some contention that these chemicals are "nutritional bud-breaking agents," the scientific evidence concludes that (1) nutrition does not break buds and (2) the nitrogen fertilizers are acting through physiological means to break bud dormancy and are plant growth regulators.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency responded to one inquiry, indicating that fertilizer products did not require registration as pesticides. We have communicated to them the information on which our conclusions are based and urged them to make a more detailed response, confirming the pesticide status of these chemicals when used to break dormancy. We are awaiting their determination.

If you have any questions about these chemicals or their regulatory status, please contact me.

Sincerely,

  
Barry Cortez, Chief  
Pesticide Registration Branch  
(916) 445-4377

cc: Mr. Daniel J. Merkley



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